



THE LIBERTY BOYS OF '76

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

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NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 14, 1906.

Price 5 Cents.

THE LIBERTY BOYS' REVENGE; OR, PUNISHING THE TORIES. *By HARRY MOORE.*



Dick and the Liberty Boys rushed in. A lad was kneeling on the ground tied to a heavy stone, with the rope around his neck. One of the Tories was about to strike him with a thick stone.

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CHAPTER I.

TROUBLESOME NEIGHBORS.

"Well, Bob, things look pretty blue."

"They do, Dick."

"But I am not losing heart."

"Nor I, Dick."

"We've been pretty nearly driven out of New York city."

"Yes, Dick. Fort Washington is yet ours, however."

"Yes, Bob; but I think that General Howe will try and get that next."

"Very true."

"The Liberty Boys are holding on, though, Bob."

"Yes, and they think that they could not have a better captain than Dick Slater."

"Nor a better first lieutenant than Bob Estabrook."

"I am satisfied if you are, Dick."

"I am not thinking of making any change at present, Bob."

"But I say, Dick?"

"Yes?"

"The Tories around our way are getting very troublesome."

"In what way?"

"Well, in the first place, they are talking very big."

"Talk is cheap, they say, Bob."

"We have had some pretty bad licks lately."

"Yes, we've been driven out of the city, and we've lost Long Island."

"The Tories around here are boasting loudly that our cause will never succeed."

"Saying so will not make it so, Bob."

"No, of course not. However, the Tories are doing more than simply talking."

"What are they doing, Bob?"

"They are annoying the poor and defenceless, they are committing excesses of all sorts, and it is not safe for many of the people to go about alone or unarmed, especially after dark."

"We must look into this, Bob, and punish these Tories, if we find that they deserve it."

Dick Slater was captain and Bob Estabrook the first lieutenant of a band of patriot youths known as the Liberty Boys.

They had been organized to help in the cause of inde-

pendence, and to annoy the enemy in every way possible.

They had now been in existence about four months, and had already done good work.

Dick enjoyed the confidence of the general-in-chief, and had been employed by him upon several missions of a delicate nature.

He and Bob and the greater part of the Liberty Boys, in fact, came from Westchester, and in the neighborhood of White Plains.

The two youths were at this time at Bob Estabrook's home, a neat cottage, where he lived with his parents and sister Alice, a most charming girl, who, by the way, was Dick's sweetheart.

Dick lived not far away with his mother and sister Edith, the latter being the sweetheart of Bob Estabrook.

The two youths were the closest of friends, being like brothers, in fact.

The Liberty Boys, one hundred in number, were encamped in the woods not far from White Plains, awaiting Dick's orders.

Dick was in frequent communication with Washington at Fort Lee, and ready to act upon short notice in case he were needed.

It was now in the early part of November in the year 1776, the weather being still mild, and the winter apparently holding off for the time.

As Dick and Bob were sitting on the broad piazza engaged in conversation, a young girl opened a window near them and looked out.

"What are you two boys talking so earnestly about?" she asked.

"Many things, Alice," was Dick's reply.

"I'll wager you were not talking about us."

"No, but we were thinking about you."

"How do I know that?" mischievously.

Dick suddenly sprang up.

He caught her before she could draw back, and kissed her rosy cheek.

"That's how!" he laughed.

"I call that taking one at a disadvantage," Alice said.

"All is fair in love and war," said Bob.

"Always discussing the war, Bob," said Edith, coming out at the moment.

"No, we were talking of other matters."

"What, for instance?" doubtfully.

"You, of course," and Bob caught the girl and kissed her before she could escape.

"What's fair for Dick is just as fair for me, I think," he laughed.

"But Dick has not kissed me."

"No, but he kissed my sister, and so I kissed his."

"You're a couple of humbugs," laughed both girls, running into the house.

"About these Tories, Bob?" asked Dick.

"What about them?"

"Have you heard of any flagrant act of theirs, or are they simply boasting and assuming airs?"

"There have been many small thefts from patriots of late, and Neighbor Andrews had a hayrick set on fire; but fortunately it was discovered in season."

"Do you think the Tories did it, Bob?"

"Well, some of them said that it served the old rebel just right."

"You heard this?"

"Yes, I heard old Burgess and Thompson Mills say it."

"They are both rank Tories."

"Yes, and Mills said that if others were burned out it would be no great loss."

"If the Continentals were successful these men would have nothing to say."

"No, but now they are growing bold, and are ready to commit any excess."

"We must watch them, Bob, and as quick as we detect them in any unlawful act, punish them."

"Yes, and punish them severely."

At that moment a young girl turned into the dooryard and came up the path.

She had a little shawl thrown over her head, was breathing hard, as though she had been running, and appeared to be greatly agitated.

"That's the Freeman girl, who lives a couple of miles down the Boston turnpike," said Bob.

"Are you some of the Liberty Boys?" the girl asked, as she came forward.

"We are."

"Where is Captain Slater?"

"I am he."

"Can you stop some bad men from ill-treating the poor and defenceless? These men are not redcoats, but they are just as bad."

"The Liberty Boys not only can punish these men, even though they are not soldiers, but they will."

"What is the trouble, Miss Freeman?" asked Bob.

"You know me?"

"Yes, I have seen you."

"You know where our house is?"

"I do."

"Last night it was set on fire. Some of the neighbors helped us put it out, but it was badly damaged. This morning our cow was stolen. My brother saw a man leading her away, and complained to Judge Brown."

"He is a just judge."

"And now Will has disappeared, and I fear that something has happened to him."

"Why do you think so?"

"Because Thompson Mills said that if Will did not say he was mistaken and withdraw the complaint he would make it all the worse for him."

"Was your brother sure that he saw the man leading the cow off?"

"Yes, he could not be mistaken. He saw him as plain as could be."

"Was it Thompson Mills himself?"

"No, it was his son Joe, the one with the club-foot. Will recognized his limp, and then he saw his tracks besides."

"And now your brother is gone?" asked Dick.

"Yes, and I am afraid that they have captured him and will do something dreadful."

"Then he would not withdraw the complaint?"

"No. He could not. It would be swearing to a lie."

"Did he say he would not withdraw it?"

"Yes. And he would not, if they killed him."

"Come, Bob," said Dick, getting up. "There is work for the Liberty Boys to do, and at once."

CHAPTER II.

UGLY STORIES.

Bob Estabrook hurried around to the back of the cottage where the stable was situated.

Dick remained at the gate, and said to the girl:

"If these Tories have run away with or destroyed any of your property, or hurt your brother, Miss Freeman, you may be sure that the Liberty Boys will take revenge upon them for it."

"I knew that there must be someone who would punish them," said the girl.

"There will be indeed, so do not fear."

Just then Bob appeared.

He rode one horse and led another.

The led horse was a magnificent coal-black animal known as Major.

He belonged to Dick.

As he sprang into the saddle Alice and Edith came out.

"Where are you off to so soon?" asked Alice.

"To visit the revenge of the Liberty Boys upon a pack of scoundrels," was Dick's answer.

"Good-by," said Bob. "We do not know just when we will return."

"Is not that Lucy Freeman?" asked Alice.

"Yes," said the girl.

"Won't you come in?"

"No, I believe not. I left my mother alone in our cottage, and I do not know what dreadful thing those men may do before I return."

"If they do they will suffer for it," said Bob. "Go in and rest, Miss Freeman."

"But if they should——"

"If they do we will punish them. If they are at their evil work now we could not prevent it."

Both girls expressed the greatest sympathy for Lucy Freeman.

She at last followed them into the cottage, and Dick and Bob rode off.

Half a mile down the road they met two more of the Liberty Boys.

They were Mark Morrison and Ben Spurlock.

As both couples paused Mark said:

"The Tories around here are certainly getting worse and worse."

"They have burned the Widow Freeman's house," added Ben.

"Burned it?" said Dick. "Do you mean since yesterday?"

"Yes, it was done an hour since. It is pretty well known who did it."

"Whom do you suspect?"

"Thompson Mills, old man Burgess, and that crowd of Tories."

"Come with us," said Dick. "We are going to see Thompson Mills and his club-footed son now."

"Old man Mills keeps his house like a fort," said Mark.

"Yes," added Ben. "He has a high fence around it, and no one can get in."

"We'll get in, I guess," said Bob dryly.

"Has Will Freeman appeared?" asked Dick, as they rode on.

"No. I heard one of the Tory sneaks say that Will fired the house himself, but I don't believe it."

"Was the old lady in the house at the time?" Dick asked.

"Yes," said Mark. "They got her out, but they say that the shock will kill her."

"More work of these scoundrels!" muttered Bob.

At the end of another half mile they met two more Liberty Boys, mounted and carrying muskets.

They were Sam Sanderson and Harry Judson.

"Well?" asked Dick.

"We have seen a number of redcoats. They have gone to the Mills house."

"Have you seen Will Freeman?" asked Dick.

"No, but Joe Mills said that he was going to catch it for swearing against him."

"Have they found the cow?"

"No, and Squire Brown has signed a search warrant. It won't be easy to get into the Tory's place."

"Come," said Dick. "If they have made Will Freeman a prisoner we will break in, search warrant or no search warrant."

They rode on faster than before, and not far from the spacious house of the Tory they met two more youths, also Liberty Boys.

They were Arthur Mackay and Walter Jennings.

"Where are you going?" they asked.

"To find out just how much mischief Thompson Mills, old man Burgess, and that evil gang have been doing," said Dick.

"They have burned down the Widow Freeman's house, and the poor old lady has had a stroke of paralysis," said Arthur.

"They say that Thompson Mills will resist the serving of Squire Brown's warrant, and that he has soldiers in the house now," added Walter.

"Does anyone know where Will Freeman is?" asked Dick.

"Well, they say that he was kidnapped and taken to the Mills place. It's like a fort, you know."

"We will storm it," said Dick. "Come, boys, I want you all, and if there were more I would not care."

Thompson Mills was one of the richest men in the neighborhood.

He lived in a large double house situated amidst spacious grounds, and surrounded by a high board fence with heavy gates.

The man said that he had put up the fence to keep the rebels out, but there were those who said that the fence hid many a deed which the Tory would not want to have his neighbors see.

Both he and his son bore bad reputations, and both had boasted that they would drive the rebels out of the neighborhood.

Burgess and others who associated with Mills were not only rank Tories, but were hard, grasping, and cruel.

They were all capable of any crime, even murder, and Dick was determined that they should be punished even if they were not driven away.

They were all rich, and had acquired their wealth in no honest way, it was said.

Being rich, they thought they could buy up judge, jury, and witnesses, and it had been a difficult matter to convict them of anything of which they were accused.

Now, however, they were going to such lengths that Dick had resolved that a stop should be put to their evil deeds.

Reaching the fence put around the Mills place, Dick went to the gate and found it locked.

He pounded on it with his sword hilt, and a little wicket was opened.

A sour face was seen, and a surly voice demanded:

"Well, what do you want?"

"We want to know what has been done with young Freeman."

"There is no such person here. Go about your business, you rebel, and don't annoy honest people."

"This is my business," said Dick. "Open the gate at

once or we will beat it down. Open in the name of the law."

The surly guardian muttered something, and was about to close the wicket when Dick said:

"If this gate is not opened at once we will surely force it."

Just then Arthur Mackay drew Dick aside, and the wicket was closed with a snap.

"There is a side gate," said the youth, "which is not as strong as this one, and is often kept open."

"Very good; we will go that way," said Dick.

Then the Liberty Boys hurried around to the side gate spoken of by Arthur.

Just as they came in sight of it they saw a young man come out.

Before he could close it they dashed up to it.

The gate was thrown wide open in a moment.

Dick and the Liberty Boys rushed in.

A lad was kneeling on the ground tied to a heavy stone, with the rope around his neck.

One of the Tories was about to strike him with a thick stick.

"Stop that, you bully!" cried Dick, sword in hand.

The Tory looked defiant, and raised the club.

"Down with them!" cried Dick.

Then he seized the Tory by the shoulder, and put the point of the sword to his breast.

The Liberty Boys with leveled pieces came close behind.

Some of the Tories looked anxious.

"Stop!" thundered Dick, "or I will not answer for consequences. Strike and you are a dead man."

CHAPTER III.

RESCUED FROM A TORY BULLY.

The Tory lowered his stick.

He was a heavily built, coarse-featured, low-browed man and seemed to be possessed of great strength.

At sight of Dick's determined air, however, he paused.

Among those in the yard were a number of red-coats.

These quickly made away at sight of the Liberty Boys.

Dick cut the rope around the boy's neck with one blow of his sword.

"Release him," he said.

A couple of the Liberty Boys sprang forward to obey his orders.

The boy's arms were fastened behind him with stout cords.

These were promptly cut and the lad was put on his feet, the end of the severed rope being removed from about his neck.

"What were you going to beat this lad for, Thompson Mills?" demanded Dick.

"For stealin' my chickens, takin' eggs, an' a lot o' things. He's a young thief, the little rebel."

"It is a lie!" cried the lad. "I never stole anything, neither from him nor anyone else."

"Wait a moment," said Dick. "You are Will Freeman, are you not?"

"Yes, and everyone will tell you that I am an honest boy."

"I believe it, Will; but wait a moment."

Then Dick turned to the Tory.

"Suppose he did steal? Could you not take him before a magistrate?"

"To be let out with a warnin'," snarled the other. "No sir, I'll give him my own warnin', an' one that he'll be likely to remember, too."

"Were you not going to beat him because he complained against your son?"

"Yes, he lied about that, too. My son Joe never had nothin' to do with the Widow Freeman's cow."

"He did!" said Joe. "I saw him leading her off in the early morning. I saw his tracks in the barnyard, besides. Anyone around here knows the sort of tracks he makes."

"Your son has a club-foot, I believe," said Dick.

"Well, suppose he has? That ain't no crime, is it? 'Cause he's misfortunate don't make him a thief and a liar, does it?"

"No," said Dick.

"There's many a man with straight legs and well-formed feet what's got bad characters."

"That has nothing to do with it," sternly. "If your son's were found in the barnyard, that is evidence against him."

"You can't prove it," snarled Mills. "Couldn't somebody steal one o' his shoes an' make the tracks?"

"You had no right to beat the boy, Mr. Mills. You and your son both have bad reputations. So has Burgess yonder, and Maywood and Bond. If the acts charged against you are proved, you will feel the revenge of the Liberty Boys."

"You can't prove nothin'!" growled Mills. "You're a-trespassin', an' if you don't leave these premises I'll have you persecuted."

"You are more used to persecution than to prosecution, I know," said Bob, "but I did not suppose you would be frank enough to admit it."

"You are accused of having the Widow Freeman's cow in your possession," said Dick. "I shall shortly present a search warrant signed by——"

"I haven't got nobody's cow," growlingly. "If you want to look in my barns you can look without no search warrant."

"He has probably taken her away," said Bob.

"Your son is the one complained of," said Dick. "It is for him to disprove it, not you."

"It's a pity if a man's character is to be taken away by every lyin' boy that comes along," snarled Mills.

"If the boy is known as a liar your son's character has not been injured."

The Tory snarled and turned away.

"You and others are suspected of many crimes in this neighborhood."

"I guess I stand as high as anyone."

"If they are proved against you you will receive the punishment you deserve."

"Don't you go to threatenin' me, young sir, or——"

"I do threaten," firmly, "and I will carry out my threats. If these charges or any others are proved against you, the Liberty Boys will take a revenge that will deter you from doing any more mischief in this section."

"You can't prove nothin'!" snarled the Tory, "and if you don't get out of here——"

"We are going, but through no fear of you."

"No, we don't like to be seen in such bad company," added Bob.

"Come, Will," said Dick. "Come, boys. There is nothing more that we can do here now."

Then Dick, taking the lad by the arm, left the yard, followed by the youths.

When they had gone out the gate closed with a bang, and was at once double-locked, bolted, and barred.

On the way to the Freeman house Dick questioned Will, whom he set on Major's back in front of him.

The boy said that three or four men had waylaid him in the morning, and had taken him to the Mills house.

Here they had threatened to beat him if he did not withdraw his charge against Joe Mills.

He had refused to do so, and they had then threatened to burn his mother's house, carry his sister off, turn his mother out of doors, and kill him if he did not swear that he had lied.

"And then?" asked Dick.

"Then Thompson Mills had them take me out in a corner of the yard back of the house, and tie me to a big stone."

"With a rope around your neck," added Dick.

"Yes, and my hands tied behind me. I could not keep my back straight, for if I did it would have choked me."

"And then?"

"Then they were going to beat me, but you and the Liberty Boys came in and saved me."

"Will you swear to all this?"

"Yes."

"And that you saw Joe Mills leading off your cow?"

"Yes."

"You are sure that it was he?"

"Yes; I saw him limp, and I found his tracks in the yard. There is not another club-footed man in the neighborhood."

"Very true. But did you see his face?"

"No; but I know his limp, and his size, and everything. I could not be mistaken."

"I don't think you are, Will, but I wish you had seen his face."

"It was early morning, and he had it turned from me. I could swear to everything else."

"Was Joe present when they were threatening you?"

"Yes, and he did it himself."

"Did old Burgess threaten you?"

"Yes, they all did; but Thompson Mills did most of it. He took the lead."

"And they said nothing at the time about your stealing his chickens?"

"No. They wanted me to withdraw the complaint against Joe, and threatened me all sorts of things if I did not."

"And they were going to beat you with a club?"

"Yes."

"The brutes! Everything tells against them, but we must have more evidence still, before we can convict them. They will all swear against you, and you have no one to corroborate you."

"And I am only a poor boy who has no friends," said Will.

CHAPTER IV.

WILL JOINS THE LIBERTY BOYS.

When Dick and his handful of Liberty Boys reached the Freeman house they found it burned to the ground.

The barn had gone with it, and all the hay, a wagon, sets of harness, and many agricultural tools.

The horse had been saved, although at a very great risk.

The fire seemed to have burst out simultaneously in the house and barn, and at four or five places.

The Widow Freeman had been gotten out of the house, but had suffered a great shock, being seriously ill at the time.

She was even then, as Will gazed at the ruins, lying at the point of death, but no one had the heart to tell him the truth.

"Did anyone see any suspicious person near the house or the barn at the time of the fire?" asked Dick.

One or two said that they had seen a strange man near the barn half an hour before, but that he had not been acting suspiciously.

No one seemed to be able to describe him except that he was tall and dressed in black.

Whether he were fair or dark, bearded or shaven, they could not tell, but all agreed that he was tall and wore black.

"Had your mother incurred the ill-will of Thompson Mills?" asked Dick of the boy.

"He had a mortgage on the house, but it had been paid a year before my father's death."

"Had she any other dealings with him?"

"He wanted to buy the place, but offered very little, and she refused him. He was always angry with her after that."

"Why did he want the land?"

"I don't know."

"But now everything is clear?"

"Yes."

"Your mother has all the receipts?"

"I think so."

"How has the man acted?"

"Very ugly. He was always calling me hard names, and saying that we had cheated him."

"There is something under all this," said Dick.

"I don't know what I am going to do," said Will. "I cannot afford to build a new house, and the cow is a great loss."

"Never mind," said Dick. "We will think of that by and by."

Just then a neighbor approached, and Will asked:

"Where is my mother? I am afraid this will kill her."

"I am afraid it will, my boy," said the other.

There was something in his tone which attracted the boy's attention.

"Where is she now?" he asked. "I must see her at once."

"Prepare yourself, my boy," the neighbor said.

Will turned faint and sick at once.

"She is dead!" he gasped, and would have fallen had not Dick caught him.

Two of the neighbors led him away, and Dick continued his investigations.

Thompson Mills seemed to have borne a spite against the widow for some time, it was said.

Joe Mills had wanted to marry Lucy Freeman, but she had refused him.

This was not on account of his deformity, but because of his character and reputation.

She had no liking for the man, but since her refusal of him both he and his father had spread evil reports of all the family.

Then, when the Continentals had met with one reverse after another, the Tory had been still more bitter against them and against all the patriots in the neighborhood.

They had lately grown much bolder, and had expressed great satisfaction at the many disasters that had befallen their neighbors.

They had laughed at the losses of Andrews and others, and declared that it served them quite right.

So open were they in expressing their satisfaction that it pretty soon became the general belief that the Tories had started the fires themselves, and committed the thefts from which the others had suffered.

Bob Estabrook declared boldly that he would yet prove it against some of the Tories, and was not at all sparing in his denunciation of Burgess, Maywood, Bond, and especially Thompson Mills and his son Joe.

Dick was not as open in his remarks, but continued to gather all the evidence he could.

When he was sure of his men he would, as he had said, take such a revenge upon them that they would be deterred from committing any more excesses such as they had been accused of.

After a while Will Freeman came to Dick and said:

"My mother is dead."

"I am very sorry to hear it, my boy," feelingly.

"These Tories are responsible for it, by their persecutions."

"So I believe."

"They should be punished."

"They will be, my lad, as soon as we can be sure of them."

"What can I do? I have no money and no friends."

"You will find friends in plenty. I will be one."

"You will?" gratefully.

"Yes, and every one of the Liberty Boys."

"You will help me punish these men?"

"We will."

"How will you go to work?"

"That I cannot tell as yet. I can assure you, however, that they will be punished."

"What are we going to do?" asked Will. "I can work, of course, but there is Lucy. She has no home."

"I will see that she has one," said Dick.

"That is very kind of you, but——"

"As for yourself," said Dick. "You have a horse?"

"Yes."

"You can ride?"

"Yes."

"Can you shoot?"

"Very well indeed."

"How would you like to join the Liberty Boys?"

"May I?" asked Will, delightedly.

"If you will, yes."

"I should like it more than anything. I wanted to do so before, but my mother needed me at home."

"It was quite right to think of her, my lad."

"But now that she is gone there is nothing to keep me."

"And you will be one of us?"

"I should like nothing better, if you will take me."

"You are just the sort of boy we want. You can ride and shoot, and you are a stanch patriot."

"Then if I may I will join at once."

"Very good, Will."

Arrangements were at once made for the widow's funeral.

They were to be very simple, as she was a person who disliked idle show in any form.

There was very little ready money at Will's disposal, and he felt that it would not be seemly to run in debt at such a time.

The funeral was held two days later, many of the neighbors attending it and expressing great sympathy for the orphans.

Lucy had found a home among sympathizing friends, and Will was now a member of the Liberty Boys.

He had been sworn in on the day of his mother's death, had taken the oath, and was now ready to fight his country's battles and mete out justice to the scoundrels who had caused his mother's death.

Mounted on his horse and wearing the Continental uniform, he compared favorably with any of his comrades, and they were all very proud of him.

"As soon as we get our orders we will march against the enemy," said Dick, "and in the meantime these Tories are to be detected and punished."

CHAPTER V.

THE MAN IN BLACK.

The day after the funeral of Will Freeman's mother, Dick got a message from the general-in-chief.

He was to go to New York, secure what information he could, regarding the enemy's movements, and report at once.

He acquainted Bob with his errand, and said:

"I want that you shall look after the Liberty Boys while I am away, Bob."

"I will do so, Dick."

"And be ready to join me at once in case I send for you."

"I will, Dick."

Mounting upon Major, Dick rode down to Fort Washington and communicated with Colonel Magaw, then in command.

The colonel might have some errands for him to do, and therefore he stopped at the fort.

"I don't know as I have any especial mission for you, Captain Slater," he said, "but of course I shall be glad to receive any information."

Fort Washington was the extreme northern limit of Manhattan or New York Island.

It was the only point on the island which the Americans now held.

Its capture by the British was, therefore, greatly desired by General Howe.

It was likely that some movement toward its subjection might be making.

Washington was, of course, anxious to learn this, and hence his sending Dick to the city.

Dick was a famous spy, and had ventured boldly into the enemy's lines on many occasions.

On his present visit Dick was attired like a country boy in his Sunday clothes, the disguise being perfect.

He was a master of disguise, in fact, and had many ways of altering himself so that even Bob was sometimes deceived.

His brown hair was covered by a flaxen wig, his cheeks were red, his eyebrows thick and bushy, and his mouth, which was firm and showed decision, seemed now to be always popping open.

He wore a brown, three-cornered hat, blue smalls and flowered waistcoat, a full-bottomed blue coat with brass buttons, and canary-colored hose.

No one would have taken him for the trim-built Dick Slater, captain of the Liberty Boys, and he did not want that they should.

Leaving the fort, he proceeded toward the city on the west side of the island.

Reaching one of the outposts, he was promptly challenged by the sentry on guard.

The soldier looked at him, laughed, and then asked:

"Well, my bumpkin, where are you going?"

"Oh, just down to the city."

"What for, my country dandy?"

"Oh, I thought I would, that's all."

"Haven't you any business to take you there?"

"Well, it ain't business exactly. You see, my cousin Susan Smithers is living down there——"

"And you want to go sparking her, do you?"

"He, he, how did you know that?" with a silly laugh.

"Oh, I guessed it."

"Well, you guessed right, by gum. Have a bite of tobacco?"

"No, I thank you," laughed the soldier. "Well, I can pass you, I guess."

"That's all right."

"Yes, you don't look as if you would give us any trouble."

"He, he, don't I? Did you guess that, too?"

"Yes, but go on, you fool, or I'll explode from laughing."

"He, he, that's funny, too," and Dick went on.

"If all of the sentries are as poor guessers as this one," he thought, "my task will be an easy one."

Going along Dick soon came to the river and found a house where boats were to be let for pleasure parties.

He had not cared to take his horse to the city, and wished to avoid the long walk if possible.

He saw some young people out on the river in boats, and, going up to the boatman, a grizzled old sailor, he asked:

"Have you another boat to spare, captain?"

"Oh, you're one o' them, too, are you?" asked the old man, looking at Dick.

"He, he, yes, I'm one of them, of course."

"Well, you look it. So you want a boat, too, do you? Going to take your sweetheart out?"

"He, he, how did you guess it? You're a clever fellow, aren't you?"

"Do you know how to handle a boat? You don't look it."

"Oh, yes—he, he—I guess I can row all right."

"Well, if you lose the boat you'll have to pay for it."

"He, he, that's funny. How could I lose a boat? It's big enough to see 'most anywhere, isn't it?"

"There, take the boat, you fool, and don't upset it and spoil your pretty clothes."

"Oh, no, I won't," and Dick entered the boat, pushed out, and was soon gliding down the river with the strong current.

Dick knew the river well, and had no trouble in han-

dling the boat, which he quickly sent ahead of all the others.

"I am afraid that if the old fellow knew who was in his boat he would not have been so free with it," was his thought.

He kept on down the broad river, pulling a strong, steady stroke, and aided by the current, which he seemed to know just where to find.

Reaching a point opposite Paulus Hook, now Jersey City, he tied up his boat at a little wharf, and then went ashore.

He attracted very little attention as he walked down Broadway, there being many dressed as gaily as he was.

One or two sober citizens in somber black or modest gray turned to look at him and smile as he passed, but on the whole very few noticed him.

He was nearing Trinity church when a man came stumbling out of a tavern just a little way down a side street, and came out upon Broadway just ahead of him.

The man had a club-foot, and walked with a peculiar gait.

Dick recognized it and the man at once.

"What is Joe Mills doing in the city?" was his instant thought.

The man might furnish information as well as anyone else.

Dick determined to follow him, therefore.

There was little chance of the Tory's recognizing him in that disguise.

A little ways farther on Joe Mills stepped in front of a man approaching him, and said:

"Hello, Melton, what are you doing in the city?"

"Keeping out of the way of those inquisitive Liberty Boys, the same as yourself, Joe," laughed the man.

Dick now noticed that he was dressed all in black.

"Ha, they won't find out anything, the meddlers!" growlingly.

"Still, you are not keeping in their way, are you, Joe?" and the man in black laughed.

"I'd like to burn down all their hovels!" stormed the Tory.

"Come and have a mug of old ale, Joe. It will warm your insides, and make you good-natured," said the man in black.

The two turned and walked down Broadway, continuing their conversation.

"Did you go into the garden when you fired the barn, Melton?" asked Mills.

"Yes."

"Did you see any place that might look like it?"

"No, and don't you suppose it has been dug up?"

"They don't know anything about it."

"But now that the place is in ruins, don't you think it would be safe to dig?"

"It might be. I'd like to get ahead of the old man. He's been scheming for it a long time."

"Yes," laughed the man in black, and then turning suddenly he faced Dick and asked:

"See here, you booby, what are you following us for?"

"He, he, for the very reason that you keep in front of me," said Dick. "If I went ahead you'd be following me—he, he."

Dick Slater never allowed himself to be taken by surprise.

"Then go ahead of us, or take the other side, you fool. I won't have you following us."

"He, he, I beg your pardon; I did not know you owned the thoroughfares. Perchance you own the houses, too? Might I be permitted to enter a public house to slake my thirst?"

"Come on, Melton," said Joe Mills. "That fool does not know enough to trouble us."

"Keep your distance, then, fellow," said the man in black, "and don't tread on our heels."

"He, he, it's safer to follow than to be followed, in some cases," said Dick, with a silly laugh.

"Keep your wisdom to yourself, idiot!" snarled the man in black, as he went on.

"Just the same, I shall follow him," was Dick's thought.

CHAPTER VI.

PLOTS AND PLOTTERS.

Dick watched Joe Mills and the man in black, and saw them enter a groggery farther down.

Then he went into an alley and made a rapid change in his appearance.

He took from his pocket a pair of black hose without feet, and with straps on the bottom, and quickly drew them up to his knees.

Then he took off his blue coat, turned it inside out, and at the same time loosened two buttons at his knees and turned up his smalls, which were double.

Then, buttoning up his coat, which was now a dark brown, and stuffing his flaxen wig inside, he looked entirely different from the silly youth of a few moments before.

In this guise he could now enter and pass unrecognized by the two Tories.

He did so pretty soon, and saw the men sitting in a corner, busy over their pots of ale.

In a few moments they looked over at him, but, seeing nothing in his appearance to excite suspicion, continued their talk.

"I am sure it's there," said Mills.

"Could you buy the lot cheap?"

"Maybe so, but what's the use?"

"Then you could dig without being disturbed."

Mills laughed.

"It would be only a waste of money. I can dig anywhere."

"Yes, and so can the old man."

"Well, let him, if I find the thing first."

"And I might dig myself."

"Aren't you and me friends?"

"Yes, but I'm looking out for myself, too."

Dick wondered what they were talking about, but could not listen too closely.

The men might notice it, and become suspicious.

All this talk of digging and buying meant nothing.

Pretty soon, however, Melton threw some light on the subject.

"Young Freeman don't know anything about it, and if you bought the land he would be glad to sell. Then you could dig and find the treasure."

It was all clear now.

Dick had heard many stories of treasure buried in the neighborhood.

None had ever been found.

The land had simply been improved by the digging.

Some such story must attach to the Freeman place, and Thompson Mills had heard it.

It was this that had made the old Tory so anxious to get possession of the place.

Dick put little credence in the story.

He had heard many similar ones, which had amounted to nothing in the end.

At the same time there might be some truth in this one.

By the laws of treasure trove, the man finding the stuff could have it.

He determined to ask Will about it.

The boy may have heard the story himself.

"Well, maybe that might be a good plan," said Mills, "but I don't want to give the young rebel anything."

"The man's greed will stand in his way," thought Dick.

"Isn't it better to give a little for a hundred times as much? You'll get back more than you put out."

"Yes; but I'd like to cheat the rebel out of everything."

"That's a pleasant sort of neighbor to have," was Dick's thought.

Then the men arose and went out, giving him merely a passing glance.

"There's no need of following them," thought Dick. "There is little more to learn on this subject."

In a few minutes three or four noisy redcoats came into the place.

They had already been drinking, and were very talkative.

They sat at a round table and began to talk without noticing the quiet stranger in the corner.

They all talked at once, but Dick caught a few expressions which enlightened him in a measure.

The redcoats, all of them officers, were very jubilant over the American reverses.

"They have nothing but a corner of the island."

"Fort Washington will be ours next."

"General Howe will be too strong for the rebels."

"You see, they will attack on every side at once."

The conversation was most confused, but Dick learned a little something from it.

There was an attack to be made upon Fort Washington at some time, no doubt.

When it was to be made, however, Dick could not now learn.

Other officers came in, and the place became very noisy.

At last it became impossible to catch even scraps of the talk.

Then Dick went out.

He had learned something, even if it were not very much.

Then he had learned the plot of the Tories, and that was something, too.

It was now well on in the afternoon, and before long it would be dark.

Dick determined to wait till the next day before returning home.

Looking around for a quiet tavern where he could spend the night, he entered a place on a side street near Bowling Green, and asked for a single room and his supper.

The landlord was an obsequious fellow, and showed him more attention than he thought the occasion warranted.

"Yes, sir, our rooms are neat, clean, and low-priced, just such as a gentleman of your quality could desire," he said.

He exerted himself so much in Dick's behalf that the youth became suspicious.

"The fellow has some scheme on hand, or he would not be so polite," was his thought.

He determined, therefore, to be on his guard.

During the evening, when Dick was in the reading-room, the landlord entered.

He was very garrulous, offered Dick a glass of wine, asked him if he would not smoke a pipe, and tried to make himself most agreeable.

"I neither smoke nor drink," said Dick, "and I am very comfortable."

At last Dick went to his room, taking a couple of candles.

When he shut the door he found that the lock was defective.

There was no way of fastening the windows, either.

One of them looked right out upon a low shed.

"I don't like this fellow," Dick thought. "He talked too much, and was too agreeable to a stranger. There was design in all this."

He thought of thieves, but as his appearance was not that of a person of wealth, and he carried no baggage, he did not see why they should consider him worth while.

His suspicions had been aroused, however, and he meant to take every precaution.

He extinguished the lights, and lay down without removing his clothes.

He was a light sleeper at all times, and would be especially so now.

It was along about midnight when he heard low voices outside.

"He must be sound asleep by this time."

"Yes, but if he had drunk the wine he would have been sounder."

"True, but we should have no trouble."

"He'll make a fine soldier, he has just the bearing."

"Yes, and the king needs more men to punish the rebels."

Dick realized now why the landlord was so cordial. He was to have been made drunk and cajoled into existing.

Now he was to be kidnapped and forced into the army.

He arose and walked softly to the window.

He thought there might be someone outside.

There was not.

"Come," said the landlord, outside. "You have the ropes and the drug."

"Yes."

Then Dick stepped out upon a shed which he saw under the window.

CHAPTER VII.

A NIGHT OF ADVENTURES.

As the landlord and his accomplice entered the room Dick dropped to the ground below.

He found himself in a little paved court, dark and silent.

There must be a way out, of course.

There were no lights in the house, either above or below, and the sky was dark and threatening.

He tried one door after another, and found them all locked.

Then, as his eyes became more accustomed to the darkness, he distinguished a narrow alley or passage leading out of the court, to the street, no doubt.

He quickly entered it, and in a few moments came out into the silent and deserted street.

He walked to the Bowling Green and looked around.

There was no one in sight, not even a watchman.

The taverns and places of call were dark and silent, people were fast asleep in their beds, and everything was still.

"It will be as bad to be found prowling about the streets at the dead of night as to be impressed," thought Dick.

As he made his way carefully toward the river, therefore, he kept his eyes and ears open.

He kept in the shadows, he avoided making a noise, and he listened for any sound, no matter how slight.

After a while he saw a gleam and heard a footfall.

He stepped into an arched doorway where the shadow was deep.

A watchman came along swinging his lantern, and shouting in a monotonous voice:

"Twelve o'clock, and all's well!"

Then he passed on down the street, and in a few moments Dick heard him repeat his call.

He might not meet another watchman, but it was as well to be cautious.

There were footpads and press gangs to be avoided, as well as watchmen.

Leaving his shelter, Dick hurried on toward the river.

No doubt his boat was where he had left it, and if so he could take it back.

As he walked on he heard footsteps behind him.

Without turning he kept on at the same pace as before.

The footsteps sounded nearer, and were those of two persons, as he knew.

They were footpads, no doubt, and considered him an easy prey.

As he kept on he noticed that only one person was following.

He had passed a little alley on his way.

No doubt the other man had entered this, and was hurrying around to get in front of him.

Nearing another crossing, he suddenly turned aside, and took the middle of the street.

As he reached the alley a man suddenly sprang out.

At the same time the man behind hurried forward.

If Dick had remained upon the walk the men would have surprised him.

As it was, they had been outwitted.

"Here, come back!" growled one of the men. "We want to know your business at this time of night."

"It is more honest than your own," was the reply.

"Stop! We are the watch."

"Without lanterns, horns, or pikes," laughed Dick, as he hurried on.

The men knew that they were detected.

At the same time they thought they might still accomplish their object.

There was no one stirring, and before the stranger could call for help they would have robbed him.

They were no more, in fact, than just a couple of thieves.

As Dick came in sight of the river they suddenly sprang toward him.

He turned in an instant.

Spat! Spat!

His fists flew out, left and right.

In an instant both men fell with a thud.

Dick Slater could deliver perfect trip-hammer blows when he liked.

He had no compunction in striking down men of the stamp of these two.

They fell heavily, and did not move for two or three minutes.

Dick's blows had been terrible ones, and well delivered.

Leaving them where they had fallen, knowing that he had not killed them, Dick hurried on.

And then, of a sudden, around the corner of Cortlandt Lane, came the watch.

There were three or four of them, and they carried pikes, horns and lanterns.

Dick almost ran into them, they came around the turning so suddenly.

"Where are you going at this time of night, neighbor, and what is your haste?" asked one.

He held up his lantern, and took a look at Dick's face as he asked the question.

"Truly, I go fast because I have been pursued by two footpads, whom I have just knocked down."

"Say you so?"

"If you will continue on to the next turning you will find them just recovering from the blows I gave them likely."

"That was a worthy deed, but what is your own business abroad at this late hour?"

The watchmen surrounded Dick, and he knew that only by a clever trick could he escape them.

"I am going across the river on an errand of importance. My boat lies at the wharf hard by. If you would like to see my pass——"

"Yes, it will be necessary at such unsettled times."

Dick thrust his hand into his pocket and took out a folded paper.

It was blank, but, as it was folded, looked most important.

He handed it to one of the watch.

The fellow took it, while the others held up their lanterns.

Then all of a sudden Dick tripped up the heels of two of them, and brought their heads together with a most resounding crack.

Then, as they all rolled over in the dust he took to his own heels, and dashed down the wharf.

He found his boat where he had left it, sprang in, cast off the warp, caught up the oars, and pushed out into the stream.

The tide was setting strong up the river, and he made good headway.

"Well, after all, it has been a day of adventures," he said, as he rowed away.

His adventures were not yet over, however.

The watchmen were on their feet and giving chase in a few moments.

As Dick shot out upon the river they came hurrying down the wharf.

As the tide caught him and sent his boat skimming upstream, they reached the edge of the wharf.

Their lanterns had been extinguished, but they had followed the sound of his footsteps.

Besides, he had spoken of a boat, and now they could make it out.

They were armed with long, heavy pistols, and these they speedily drew.

The stranger was a bad character, no doubt, and they could be pardoned firing upon him.

Crack! Crack!

One bullet struck one of Dick's oars, and another plowed a hole in the side of the boat.

"Good-night, gentlemen," laughed Dick, rowing away.

CHAPTER VIII.

LOOKING FOR THE EVILDOERS.

Dick went flying over the water at good speed, and no more shots reached him.

Two or three were sent after him, but they all fell short.

He was a good oarsman, and knew the river as well by night as by day.

Two or three men came hurrying out of houses by the river as the shots rang out, but no one pursued him.

The watch fired their pistols, but after that did not reload.

They would have a wonderful story to tell of how they had shot a river pirate, and how his boat had been carried out to sea.

Having no booty to show and the fact of the tide running in an opposite direction did not disturb them in the least.

Dick continued on his way, helped by the strong tide and by daybreak he had reached the boat-house.

Drawing the boat up on the sand and tying it, he went away without taking the trouble to arouse the old boatman, now fast asleep in his cottage.

The boat lent to the country boy had been returned, and that was sufficient.

Exercising caution as he went on, he managed to slip through the lines without arousing the sentries, and then hurried on.

Reaching the tavern where he had left Major, he had a nap of an hour, got his breakfast, and then set off to report to the general-in-chief.

Having told what little he had learned, he asked:

"Have you any further instructions, your excellency?"

The general pondered for a moment.

"No, I have not, Dick," he said. "Hold yourself in readiness, however, to execute any orders I may have for you."

"I will, your excellency," and then Dick saluted and retired.

He reached the camp of the Liberty Boys during the afternoon, and at once sought Bob.

He related his adventures briefly, and then asked:

"How have the Tories been behaving themselves during my absence, Bob?"

"Very badly, Dick. Two barns and a hayrick, all belonging to patriot families, were burned last night."

"Say you so?"

"Yes, and a boy of twelve was caught by Tories and flogged. He was one of Andrews' boys."

"Did he recognize any of his tormentors?"

"One was Sol Mills, Joe's younger brother."

"At all events, Joe himself was not there, so he cannot be accused of it."

"Very true."

"Is it known who set the barns and rick on fire?"

"No, but the Tories say that it served the rebels right."

"There was no Tory property destroyed?"

"No."

"Has there been since these outrages began?"

"No, not once."

"And none of the patriots have said that it served the others right?"

"No; they have all expressed the deepest sympathy."

"And have given aid, also, have they not?"

"Yes, in every case."

"Has Thompson Mills ever given either sympathy or aid to any of his unfortunate neighbors?"

"No, not a single time."

"Have any of the other Tories done so?"

"They haven't," said Bob, "and in every case they have laughed at the unfortunates, and said that it served them right."

"This man in black set fire to the Freeman barn," said Dick, "and I think I will prove in time that Thompson Mills has instigated every one of these crimes, if he has not taken part in them."

"If it is proved, Dick, what will we do with him?"

"Punish him in a way that will teach him and others like him that such acts are not to be tolerated for a moment."

"Then you think that the Tories have done these things, Dick?"

"I have not the slightest doubt of it, Bob."

"But we've got to catch them in the act."

"We will do it. They have grown bold, and think that no one dares punish them."

"They will think different when they feel the Liberty Boys' revenge."

"Very true, and they are bound to feel it shortly."

Dick then sent for Will Freeman, and asked:

"Have you ever heard any stories of a treasure being buried somewhere in your garden?"

"Yes, but I never believed them."

"Have you ever dug for it?"

"No."

"Has anyone else?"

"Not as far as I know."

"Did your mother believe these stories?"

"No."

"Nor your father?"

"No."

"Thompson Mills does."

"Why do you think so?"

"That is why he wanted to get hold of the property."

"He has money enough without going digging for buried treasure."

"The more some men have the more they want."

"Very true."

"Did you ever hear how this story of buried treasure originated?"

"I never did."

"Then you don't know if it is Captain Kidd's or whose it is?"

"No, and I never believed that there was any."

"There might be, Will. A shrewd man like Thompson Mills would not be misled by a mere story."

"He is very ignorant, Dick."

"I know, but shrewd. He has some clew to this treasure, or he would never make such efforts to get hold of the property."

"Perhaps not."

"We must try and learn what his clew is."

"And then?"

"Look for the treasure."

"Do you think it is really there?"

"It may be. Joe Mills and the man in black are going to dig on their own account."

"They are?"

"Yes, but at random. I think the old man has some idea where he ought to look to find it."

"And Joe has not this knowledge?"

"No."

"Well, as for me, I don't believe it, and the only treasure in our place is what we can get out of it by hard work."

"Such is pretty apt to be the case, Will, and yet I am inclined to believe in this particular story."

"Well, I trust that you may be right, but I doubt it."

"But if I find that there is treasure in your garden, am I at liberty to dig for it?"

"Yes."

"If I find it what shall I do with it?"

"It will be yours to do as you like with."

"Yes, but what would you like me to do with it?"

"Use it to further the cause of liberty."

"I will do so, after your sister is provided for."

The matter was then dismissed for the time.

When it grew dark Dick sent for Bob and said:

"I want the Liberty Boys to patrol the neighborhood in small parties. You and Mark and Ben, Sam, Arthur, and Walter, and Carl, Patsy and Nels had better take parties of six or eight. I will take a party myself."

"The idea is a good one."

"I will make out a territory for each party, and we will leave one to guard the camp."

"You want that we shall keep a watch on the Tories?"

"Yes, and if you see anyone firing a barn or house or rick, shoot."

"And in case of anyone found acting suspiciously?"

"Arrest him. These evil deeds have got to be stopped."

CHAPTER IX.

CAUGHT IN THE ACT.

Shortly after bedtime that night Dick, with a small party of Liberty Boys, set out to look for the malefactors who had been terrorizing the neighborhood.

He took Will Freeman, Phil Waters, Harry Judson, Dave Dunham, Tom Hunter, and Ben Brand, all of them reliable youths.

They did not take their horses, as they were not going any great distance.

Then, too, the horses might excite suspicion.

This was just what they wished to avoid.

They were all armed with pistols, and carried plenty of ammunition.

If they caught anyone red-handed they would not hesitate to shoot.

Incendiarism was a crime at all times, but just now it amounted to an act of war.

Dick resolved to punish it accordingly, therefore.

In the territory covered by Dick were many patriot families of moderate means.

It was such who had suffered most from the acts of the Tories, Dick had noticed.

None of them had been threatened, that he knew.

He therefore had no definite information to work upon.

"We will watch Thatcher's place first," said Dick.

"He has two sons in the patriot army," said Will.

"Yes, and there are only the old folks and a daughter at home."

The Thatcher house was on a by-road, the barn being closer to the road than the house on account of changes made in laying out the highway.

Thatcher had expected to be right on the main road, but had been left on what had simply been a lane.

Making their way cautiously, the youths reached the barn and lay behind bushes near the roadside.

For some time all was silent, but at last Dick detected the sound of approaching footsteps.

His hearing was keener than that of any of his comrades.

"There is someone coming," he said to Will.

"I don't hear anything."

"Listen and you may."

In a minute or two Will said:

"I hear someone now, but I don't know how many there are."

"There are four, all men. I can tell by their tread."

Pretty soon Dick touched Will, who was nearest to him.

This was a signal that the youth was to follow.

Dick crept along, close to the fence, Will close behind.

In a couple of minutes Dick heard in a low voice:

"Have you got the oil and matches handy?"

"Yes," answered someone.

"You two go to the side, and we will take the front. We'll learn these rebels a lesson."

Dick did not recognize either of the voices.

He saw two men leap the fence and hurry toward the side of the barn, which loomed up dark before them.

Dick imitated the chirp of a cricket.

This was to call the youths to his side.

In a few moments Harry, Phil, and Tom came up.

"Surround the place," Dick said.

Then he and Will crouched by the fence and listened.

In a moment a flame appeared a few yards distant.

Two men were seen crouching beside the barn, ready to push a mass of inflammable material inside, where a board had been torn off.

"Fire!" cried Dick.

Will Freeman obeyed on the instant.

Whether his aim was bad from excitement could not be told.

The bullet flattened against the side of the barn, and the two men sprang to their feet in a moment and dashed away.

Dick fired, and one of the men yelled with pain, but kept right on.

Will leaped over the fence, and stamped out the inflammable stuff.

It was tow, cotton, and wood-fiber soaked with oil.

Will stamped it out as two or three shots were heard.

Then two men leaped the fence and went dashing down the road with the youths firing after them.

None of them was hit, apparently, or at any rate not bad enough to fall.

Pretty soon lights were seen, and Mr. Thatcher appeared at the back door.

"Who's there?" he said.

"Dick Slater and some of the Liberty Boys."

"What's the trouble, Dick?"

"We detected four scoundrels in the act of firing your barn, but, unfortunately, they escaped."

"Do you know them?"

"No; I hit one, but he got off."

"I hit another," cried Harry, "but he ran away, just the same."

"I'm obliged to you, boys," said the old man. "I've been afraid of something like this."

"Have you been threatened, Mr. Thatcher?" asked Dick.

"No, not directly, but men have hinted that I had better look out how I talked."

"About what?"

"The war."

"Who told you to look out?"

"Tories."

"Do you know any of them?"

"Some I do and some I don't; Mills and his son told me I ought to be careful."

"Did they threaten?"

"No, but they said some folks didn't like the way I talked, and might resent it."

"By setting fire to your barn?" suggested Dick.

"They did not say how. They were very vague."

"But you still talked as you felt, I suppose?"

"Yes; I am not to be muzzled. I have my convictions, and I shall be true to them."

"That is right. Well, I don't think you will be troubled again soon."

"I hope not."

"If anybody makes hints to you again just let me know."

"I will, Dick. Can I do anything for you or the boys?"

"No, thank you. We are out on patrol, and may be needed elsewhere."

The old man thanked them again, and then they went away.

Visiting the next house in their district, the occupant, an old lady, told them that some suspicious characters had been around during the evening, but that the dogs had frightened them away.

"How many were there, Mrs. Mattison?" asked Dick.

"I saw two. I went to the door when the dogs barked, and saw two men hurrying away from the hen-house."

"Keep the dogs out. They are the best of watchmen. If you know how to use one, get a pistol, and shoot at every suspicious person you see lurking about. They won't come the second time."

The youths went away, and heard no more reports of excesses being committed in their territory.

Early in the morning Dick found Bob, having sent Will and the rest back to camp.

"Well, Bob?" he asked.

"We surprised a party setting fire to Mordaunt's house, and opened fire on them. I hit Bond in the shoulder. The gang carried him away, but I recognized him."

"How many were there?"

"Three or four. I am not sure of the rest, but I saw Bond. I am sure of him. He'll have a sore shoulder for the next month or so."

"Did you fire on any others?"

"No, but one party heard us coming and ran. We could hear them going at full speed."

CHAPTER X.

CONCERNING THE BURIED TREASURE.

When the other parties came in Mark Morrison was the first to report.

"We came upon a party of Tories robbing hen-roosts," he said. "We fired, and Dan Maywood got a shot in the leg."

"You recognized him?"

"Yes. His friends carried him away. We did not want him so long as we had caught him in the act."

"No, and you can lodge a complaint against him in the morning."

"He may not remain."

"If he goes away so much the better. The section will be well rid of such a man."

Walter Jennings and his party had captured a man of evil reputation and a Tory, who had been detected trying to steal a cow from a poor widow whose main support it was.

She was a patriot, and her husband had been killed at the battle of Long Island.

There were three in the party, but only one had been captured.

"I know the others," said Walter. "They are Simon Gilfeather and David Rankin. We all saw them and can swear to them."

"Take this fellow to jail and enter complaints against the others before Judge Brown. These scoundrels are beginning to feel the Liberty Boys' revenge."

The other parties had simply frightened away several suspicious looking persons, but had not fired upon or captured any of the evildoers.

"We have done good work to-night," Dick said, "and there will be less trouble than formerly."

"We haven't caught the ringleaders yet, though," said Bob.

"Well, we must not relax our vigilance. These pests will be cautious now, but we must maintain a watch upon them, even if nothing is heard of them for a week."

The next morning complaints were made against several of the Tories, and the man that had been stealing the cow was promptly sent to jail for six months, as he was simply an accessory.

The Tories were less loud spoken for a day or so.

They saw that the Liberty Boys were in earnest, and evidently feared a still worse punishment.

Dick took pains to have it known that anyone caught committing depredations would be fired upon, no matter who they were, and that incendiaries would be hanged if captured.

The leaders had not been caught, as Bob intimated, but for a day or two there were no reports of thefts or fires or of threats against "rebels."

Joe Mills came back from the city and began to talk as boastfully as ever.

Mark Morrison was in a public place when Joe was talking, and said:

"I guess you haven't heard the news, Mills."

"What do you mean by that?" growlingly.

"Why, how a lot of your gang have disappeared, with complaints hanging over them."

Wills glared at Mark, who continued:

"A lot of your gentlemen tried your barn-burning, cow-stealing tactics the other night, and some of them got shot. Others are keeping away to avoid being sent to jail."

"I haven't got anything to do with it," with a snarl.

"No, and it's a good thing for you that you had not. You won't say it served them right, I suppose."

"I dunno what you're talking about."

"All I can say is that you had better curb your evil tongue," added Mark, "and not put yourself under suspicion."

Mills went away growling, but he took Mark's advice, nevertheless.

He did not say an insulting word about the patriots for the next week.

The Liberty Boys patrolled the neighborhood as before, but for two or three nights nothing suspicious was to be seen.

They kept up their vigilance, however, being determined to put a stop to the persecutions of the Tories.

Three or four days later Dick took Major and rode as far as the Harlem river, and then made his way to the city in search of information.

He learned much of great importance, and was on his way back when he saw Joe Mills entering a tavern on the King's Bridge road.

The complaint against Mills for stealing the widow Freeman's cow had not been withdrawn, but the fellow had given bail, and the case had been postponed.

Seeing the two men together, Dick, who was in disguise, suspected that they had something to talk about which he would be glad to know.

Leaving Major in the care of a hostler, Dick hurried to the tap-room of the tavern.

He was certain to find the two Tories there.

He paused at the door and listened.

The men were within.

"I stole the paper from the old man's secretary," Mills was saying.

"Can you make anything out of it?"

"Yes; all I want. It isn't Captain Kidd's money at all."

"Isn't it?"

"No, it's money that was hid from the Injuns and the British, and buried in what's now Freeman's garden."

There was something in the story, after all.

"Is the place marked out?"

"Yes. You go north from the road a hundred feet, and then—but it's all down on the paper."

"You've got it?"

"Yes."

"Let me see it."

"You'll steal it!"

"H'm! you've got no call to say that, you cow-stealer!"

"As much as you have, barn-burner!"

"Who stole it from the old man? Second thief's the best owner, I guess."

"Well, that's all right," growled Mills. "I'll show it to you."

Dick drew as near as he dared.

Melton read the paper giving the location of the treasure.

Dick had tablets and pencil with him.

His memory was good, but he resolved not to trust to it entirely on this occasion.

He listened attentively, and took down everything of importance.

"That's all right," said Mills. "I'll divide with you if you'll help me get the stuff."

"When will we go?"

"Soon as we can."

"We'd better go at night?"

"Of course. Any other time wouldn't be safe."

Then the men were silent for a time.

"Hear anything in the city?" asked Mills.

"Yes."

"Is Howe going to do anything?"

"Yes."

"I hope he'll drive the rebels out. Those Liberty Boys have been making trouble."

"How so?"

"Why, they're actually going to law and spoilin' the fun we've been havin' up there."

Melton laughed.

"That cow case has been put off, I hear?"

"Yes," growlingly.

"What about the case of the old man?"

"He's been keeping quiet, but he's working just the same. We'll get the best of the rebels yet."

"Well, we'll go and get this stuff pretty quick before he gets at it."

"Very good. To-morrow do?"

"Yes. Come to the back gate and whistle."

"I'll do it."

Dick now left the tavern.

He had heard all that he wanted to know.

He made his way to the general-in-chief's headquarters at once and reported.

What he had learned concerned a projected assault upon Fort Washington by several parties.

Washington was glad to get the news.

Knowing the enemy's plans, he could make preparations accordingly.

Dick received certain instructions and then returned to camp.

"We are likely to have fighting soon, Bob," he said to his first lieutenant.

"That is good news," excitedly.

"Yes, Fort Washington is to be attacked."

"That is serious. I trust that Magaw will be able to hold out against the British."

"Yes, for it is an important position."

"That is why Howe wants it."

"Well, the Liberty Boys will do their best to defeat him, Bob."

"Very true," agreed Bob.

Leaving Bob, Dick found Will Freeman in his tent and called him aside.

"I have news, Will."

"Of what sort, Dick?"

"I have learned the location of the treasure in your garden."

"In what manner?"

Dick then told how he had discovered the secret.

"Well, you said that old man Mills must have some clew," he said."

"Yes."

"Do you believe it is of any use, Dick?" asked Will.

"We can, at all events, test it, my lad."

"True. Let me look at the copy you made."

Dick showed it to him.

"Let us go to the old place and locate it by this," he said.

"Very good."

Then they set off for the ruins, Will more excited than he would ever have acknowledged he could be over the matter of the buried treasure.

CHAPTER XI.

WHAT THEY FOUND IN THE GARDEN.

On the way to the old house Dick stopped and got a pickax, a couple of spades, a sack and some rope.

He met Mark and a couple of others and took them with him.

"They'll be good pickets if we don't want them to help us," said Dick.

"Very true," said Will.

Mark and the others had no idea why they were wanted.

They were accustomed to obeying Dick without question, however.

When they reached the old place they studied the directions Dick had.

By following these they at last found themselves in a corner of the garden near an old apple tree.

"We never planted very much here," said Will, "as there was too much shade."

Measuring off a certain distance, Dick said:

"Try the pick here, boys."

"Are you going to turn farmer, Dick?" asked Mark.

"Well, we expect to get money out of this ground," said Dick, with a laugh.

Then he struck the pick into the ground.

"This earth has not been disturbed in years," he said.

Then he struck in the pick again, driving it as deep as he could.

"What are you going to raise?" asked Mark.

"A chest of gold," said Will.

"Do you really mean it?"

"Well, we hope to."

"Is there one there?"

"So we have heard."

"There are lots of such stories that don't amount to anything," said Mark.

"Well, if I did not think there was something in this one, I would not bother," said Dick.

"No, you are not one to be fooled with cock-and-bull stories."

Then, while Will used the pick, Dick told Mark what he had learned about the buried treasure.

"That sounds more reasonable than a Captain Kidd story," said Mark.

"Yes, the old Dutch settlers often buried their money when they feared a raid of the Indians or British," said Will.

Quite a good deal of earth having been loosened by this time, the youths now got to work digging with the spades.

Mark was sent to stand guard outside to keep off those who might be drawn thither by curiosity.

The garden was in sight from the road, the house and barn being now out of the way.

Some of the neighbors in the rear, seeing the youths at work, might come around to ask questions.

Dick wanted to keep the matter quiet for various reasons.

Above all, he did not wish it to reach the ears of Joe Mills.

Two or three curious persons did come around and questioned Mark.

"Making a garden?" they asked.

"Yes," was the answer.

"Ain't it rather late?"

"Not for the crop we expect to raise."

"What you going to raise?"

"Something to make money."

"Waal, wheat is as good as anything. You try that."

"Very well."

"Rye is better'n wheat in that sile," said another.

Then began a discussion as to the value of different crops, in which Mark took no part.

He was amused by the talk, but said nothing.

At last, their curiosity being satisfied, the inquisitive neighbors went away.

Dick and the rest were still hard at work.

They had their coats off and were very busy.

Having cleared quite a large space, Dick now took the pick again and drove it into the ground.

It struck something hard and made his hands tingle.

"That's either a stone or our box," he cried.

He loosened more earth and then took a spade.

Throwing out several spadefuls of earth, he suddenly exclaimed:

"There is something here!"

"What is it?" they all cried.

Then Dick and Will began to dig.

In a few moments the corner of an iron box was disclosed.

"Here she is!" cried Will.

"So it is," echoed Harry.

Then Dick put in his pick and got the blade under a corner of the box.

Putting his weight upon it, he raised it slightly.

"Clear it away, boys," he said.

They all took spades and removed the earth from the top of the chest.

It was two feet long and a foot wide.

"It isn't very big," said Dick, "but it may be heavy for all that."

"How are we going to get it up?" asked Harry. "The hole is three feet deep."

"Get the rope, Harry, and when Will and I lift you and Ben pass it under."

Dick and Will took their picks and raised one end of the chest.

Then Harry and Ben got the rope under the end.

"Now get it farther under," said Dick. "Lift hearty, Will."

Three of them now lifted the chest while Harry slipped the rope under.

It was now at the middle of the chest.

"Make a good knot," said Dick, "and then we'll all take hold."

This was done, and the four youths laid hold of the rope and hauled.

It was a stout, new rope, and although it stretched, did not break.

With all four hauling upon it the box was bound to come out if the rope did not break.

There was enough of it, and Dick told Will to double it around the chest.

This was done.

Then they all laid hold upon it once more.

In a short time the box was drawn out of the hole upon the ground.

It was as deep as it was long, and was quite a heavy affair.

"We ought to get it away before we open it," said Dick, "for we will attract too much attention."

"I can get a horse and cart," said Will.

"Do so," said Dick, "and we will drag it to the road."

When Will had gone for the horse and cart the others filled the hole, throwing in loose stones to take the place of the box.

Then they pounded the earth down hard and then put

turf upon it to give it the look of not having been disturbed.

The chest was dragged to the cart, lifted in and covered with sacks.

Then Will got some potatoes and other things from friendly neighbors and drove to the camp.

As there were a good many of the Liberty Boys, and they had to be fed, it was no unusual sight to see wagons drive out to the camp, and so no one wondered at seeing Will now.

There was a good-natured Irish lad named Patsy Brannigan, who was the cook, and when Will drove up he asked:

"Phwat have yez dhere, me bhy?"

"Potatoes," said Will. "Jump in and lift out a sack of them."

Patsy jumped into the cart, and, as luck would have it, seized the box first.

"Tear an' ages, phwat have yez dhere?" he gasped, breathing hard. "Shure an' dhim pitaties are as heavy as lead."

"But as good as gold!" laughed Will.

CHAPTER XII.

COUNTING THE TREASURE.

Patsy Brannigan wiped his reeking forehead and said:

"Shure an' dhat's a box, Will, me bhy. Dhere do be no pitaties in dhat."

"No, there are not. Take the potatoes out first."

Patsy threw a sack of potatoes on his shoulder and walked off with it.

When he came back for another he had a fat German youth with him.

This was Carl Gookenspieler, one of the Liberty Boys, and the source of a good deal of fun for all the rest.

"Take dhe little box up to Dick's tint, Cookyspieler," said Patsy, drawing out a sack of potatoes.

"All righd; dot was nodings; dot was on'y de shmall pox."

"Only dhe shmallpox, is it? Yez'll not be gittin' dhe shmallpox here, me bhy, an' givin' it to dhe rist av us."

"I didn't sayed der shmallpox; I sayed der shmall pox."

"Shure, an' Oi don't see dhe difference."

"Dot was no diseases been, Batsy; dot was der liddle pox alretty."

"Oh, Oi see; it's dhe shmall box, yer mean?" laughed the jolly Irishman.

"Ya, dot was what I said."

"Well, take it out."

Patsy stood with the sack on his back watching Carl. He did not wish to miss any of the fun.

Will turned around on the wagon seat, but said nothing.

Carl caught hold of one of the handles of the box and pulled.

He thought from the size of the box that he was going to have an easy job of it.

He did not, for he could not budge the thing.

"What you doodled, put some nails mit it?" he asked.

"No, it isn't nailed," said Will.

Then Carl tugged again, but could not move the box.

"What you was got in dot?" he asked. "Was dot some shtones, or what it was?"

"Yis, Oi think it is," roared Patsy. "Thry it agin, Cookyspiller, me bhy."

Carl tried it, while the sweat poured off his face.

He weighed two hundred pounds, but he could not budge the box.

I dinks I was tooked off mein goat," he muttered.

Then he removed his coat, and in his shirt and breeches went at the box again.

This time he jumped up in the cart and pushed instead of pulled.

He moved the box this time with considerable effort.

"Off dot boxes was so big lige it was heafy been," he said, "it should was been so big lige ein houses."

Patsy roared and said:

"An' av yez cud do all dhat yez tink yez can, ye'd be as shtrong as tin horses, begorra."

"You can't move it, Carl," said Will. "It took four of the boys to lift it in the cart."

"What it was?" asked the puzzled German boy.

"Oh, just a box."

"What you was done mit it?"

"Take it to Dick's tent."

"Why you don'd toldt me dot was heafy lige dot?" Carl asked.

"Shure an' yez never axed me," laughed Patsy, as he went off with the potatoes.

Will called to four or five of the Liberty Boys, and they came for the chest.

Between them they carried it to Dick's tent and set it inside.

"What is in it, Will?" they all asked. "It's as heavy as lead."

"We dug it up in our garden. I think it contains treasure of some sort. Joe Mills is going to dig up the garden to-morrow or the next day for it."

"He'll be a badly disappointed Tory, I think," laughed one.

The youths then unloaded the cart and drove back to where he had got it.

When he returned to the camp he found Dick and the others.

Dick then proposed that they open the chest, and Will agreed.

They pried off the top and found a number of silver tankards, cream jugs and other vessels closely packed and filled with silver and gold coins.

The tankards were of Dutch make, and the coins were nearly all Spanish.

At the time that the vessels must have been brought over from Holland, Spanish gold was in use nearly all over Europe.

There were a few French gold pieces and some English, but the greater part was Spanish.

"A good deal of Spanish gold found its way into Holland during Spain's occupancy of the Netherlands," said Dick, "and hence these coins now among these Dutch utensils."

The spaces between the vessels were filled with the coins, and there was also a thick bed of them at the bottom.

There were also yards and yards of old Spanish lace, yellow with age, strings of gold and silver beads, and gold and silver head ornaments worn by Dutch women.

There was estimated to be very nearly five hundred pounds in money, the greater part of which was in silver.

The gold and silver ornaments and the vessels were worth something, while the lace itself was quite valuable.

There were papers at the bottom of the chest which showed that it had belonged to an old Dutch family, long since extinct.

"There is no question as to its belonging to you, Will," said Dick, "since you dug it up, and now the question is, what shall we do with it?"

"Give the money to General Washington," said Will. "Lucy may have the other things."

"That seems to be a fair division. The silver vessels will bring a fair price, and the lace must be very valuable, although I am not much of a judge of such things."

The money was made up in a separate package and entrusted to Dick to give to the general-in-chief the next time he saw him.

The other things were packed up separately, and then the chest, which was quite heavy, was thrown aside, being of little value.

Lucy was greatly astonished at the finding of the treasure, but thought that her share was altogether too large.

"I will keep the silver tankards and cream jugs," she said, "and also the beads and the ornaments, but the lace is much too valuable for me to think of wearing."

"What shall you do with it?" asked Dick.

"Sell it and devote the proceeds to the cause of liberty," said the patriotic girl.

Dick agreed to dispose of it to a dealer in the city and took charge of it.

The next night he took Will, Patsy and Mark and went to the garden of the old place where, close to the gnarled and ancient apple tree, they awaited the coming of the treasure seekers.

CHAPTER XIII.

TWO DISAPPOINTED TORIES.

Patsy got up in the apple tree, Will and Mark got behind it, and Dick crouched in the long grass and tangled weeds hard by.

It was quite late when they heard footsteps approaching and saw the gleam of a couple of lanterns.

In a few moments Joe Mills and Melton stood under the old tree.

"I located the spot this afternoon, when nobody was around," said Mills.

He did not know that Dick had been watching him all the time.

"That's better than having to find it in the dark," said Melton.

"Yes, that's what I thought. I reckoned that right under this old apple tree was the spot."

"Very good; let's get to work."

They had brought a couple of spades with them, and now, setting the lanterns down, they got to work.

They took off their coats and threw them on the ground, and then each took a spade and began to dig.

The lanterns were placed near the tree and threw a deep shadow upon Will and Mark.

"You ought to know this place," said Melton. "You must have passed it when you took away the cow."

"I was about as near as when you set fire to the barn."

"Nobody can prove that," said Melton, digging.

"And they can't find the cow. She's dead and eaten long before now."

"They must have planted things here," grunted Melton. "It digs easy."

"Well, I am not complaining about that. I never did like hard work."

"No, you are not used to it, but you can drive a hard bargain."

"No harder than you, you scheming money-lender."

"You're glad to borrow it, you spendrift."

"But not to pay your high rate of interest, you grasping wretch."

"Compliments floy phwin gintle folks meet," thought Patsy up in the tree.

"It is no higher than the law allows," growled Melton.

Then they continued to dig, and for some minutes said nothing.

They threw the earth out rapidly, and pretty soon Joe's spade struck something.

"I've got it!" he cried.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

He put in his spade again, while Melton brought one of the lanterns.

Then Mills brought out a large stone, and Melton another.

"Maybe it's below the stone," said Joe.

They tumbled out a lot of them and then struck earth again.

"It digs harder now," grunted Melton.

"Yes, I guess we're getting down to it."

It was more difficult digging now, the earth having been undisturbed for generations.

They sweated and puffed and grunted, and at last the man in black growled:

"I'd like to have the old Dutchman here who planted it so deep. I'd give——"

At that moment Patsy leaned over so far to see what was going on that he fell out of the tree.

He landed right astride Melton's shoulders and knocked him flat.

"Oh, glory, Oi'm kilt entoirely!" he roared.

Will and Mark behind the tree let out peals of laughter at this unexpected occurrence.

Joe Mills jumped out of the hole in a fright, kicked over the lantern and fled in terror.

Then Dick came hurrying up, seized the other and said:

"Quick, boys, secure this fellow. By his own confession he is guilty of setting fire to the barn."

Mark and Will came out from behind the tree and seized Melton.

Patsy got on his feet in a moment and said:

"Shure an' it wor looky dhat Oi fell on dhis felly inshted av crackin' me hid on dhe corner av dhe iron ehst yez tuck out yistidday."

"What do you want of me?" growled Melton, as Mark and Will held him fast.

"To punish you for burning the Widow Freeman's barn."

"You can't prove that I did it."

"You told Joe Mills so just a few minutes ago."

"That is nothing. You can't use a man's confession against him without corroborative evidence."

"You are a suspicious character, and was seen hanging about the place just before the fire. You will have to go with us."

"An' dhin dhey'll put yez to breakin' shtones," said Patsy, "which is harder worruk dhan diggin' for tings dhat yez can't foind."

"Have you removed the chest?" growled Melton.

"We have," was Dick's reply.

"You had no right to it."

"We had the right of the first finders."

"You did not. We knew it was there. You did not."

"You only thought so. It might have been a hoax, or the chest might have been taken out a hundred years ago, and you would have known nothing about it. Besides, it was on Will's property."

"Be that as it may, I had nothing to do with the barn-burning, and you cannot hold me for it."

"We are of a different opinion," said Dick. "Bring him along, boys."

Dick went ahead with the lantern to show the way, and Will and Mark followed, the prisoner between them.

All of a sudden Melton raised his foot, kicked the lantern out of Dick's hand, and extinguished it.

Then he wrenched his arms loose from the grasp of the Liberty Boys, and made a sudden dash.

As soon as he recovered from his surprise Dick drew a pistol and fired in the direction of the retreating footsteps.

Then the lanterns were relighted, but the man could not be found.

"He will escape us, as he is used to the place," said Will. "He has been here many times, no doubt."

"Shure an' it's no use croyin' over shpilled milk," said Patsy. "Dhe man is gon' an' we are will rid av him, dhe robber."

"Yes, there need be no tears shed over his absence," said Dick. "He has had a warning, and it is not likely that he will return."

"An' a good riddance to him, dhe thafe," said Patsy heartily.

The youths now left the old garden, and returned to camp.

The next day they went to the place again, filled up the hole and took away the spades.

Joe Mills was not seen in the neighborhood, and his father kept himself secluded, going out but little, and having nothing to say to anyone, not even his own cronies.

"He is growing cautious," said Dick. "He has been warned like the rest, and fears the revenge of the Liberty Boys."

"Yes, and it will fall on him unless he mends his ways," said Bob. "He is quiet now, but he needs watching just the same."

The Liberty Boys continued their nightly patrol without discovering any more outrages, and then one day Dick suddenly had orders from the general to take the youths and go to the defence of Fort Washington.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FALL OF FORT WASHINGTON.

Early in the morning of the 16th of November Colonel Magaw began his preparations for the expected attack on Fort Washington.

On the day before General Howe had sent in a summons for him to surrender.

It was accompanied with a threat to resort to extremities if not complied with.

Magaw had intimated a doubt that Howe would execute his threat.

He also assured the British general that, actuated by the most glorious cause that mankind ever fought in, he would defend his post to the very last extremity.

Colonel Magaw had a force of nearly three thousand men, much larger than the fort could contain, in fact.

The majority of them, therefore, were stationed about the outworks.

Colonel Lambert Cadwalader, with eight hundred Pennsylvanians, was posted in the outer lines, about two and a half miles south of the fort.

This side was menaced by Lord Percy with a force double Cadwalader's.

The Liberty Boys were stationed on Cock Hill, a precipitous eminence north of the fort and between it and Spyt den Duivel Creek.

Near them was Colonel Rawlings, of Maryland, with a strong body of troops, many of them riflemen.

Colonel Baxter was posted to the east of the fort on rough, woody heights, bordering the Harlem river.

The enemy had thrown up redoubts on high ground on the opposite side, and Baxter had been sent to watch them.

Dick had a three-gun battery on Cock Hill, and meant to make it as effective as he could.

The hill commanded passes along which the enemy might move, and was therefore a most important position.

That it should have been entrusted to him was the strongest evidence of the confidence with which he was regarded by the general-in-chief.

"Shure, an' it's a foine view we do have from here," said Patsy, standing near one of the guns.

"Yah, dot was a bully one, I bet me," said Carl, "but we was not came here to loock at der sceneries, is is?"

"Shure, an' it was not, an' dhat's phwat Oi wor thinkin' av, Cookyspiller."

"What you was t'ought aboud, Batsy?"

"Dhat before long dhe shmoke av dhe powdher will shut it out intoirely."

"Dot was not so worsen as dot you was got shut ould yourself mit one off dose cannon-balls, ain't it?"

"Shure, an' dhe cannon-ball is not made dhat will shut me out, me bhy."

"Vor why is dot?"

"Becos phwin Oi see it comin' Oi'll rin so fasht dhat it won't come widin tin moiles av me."

"You don't could run so fast lige a gannon-ball, Batsy."

"Shure, an' yez niver saw me run annyhow, an' so yez can't tell."

General Howe had planned four simultaneous attacks on the fort.

One was to be made on the north by Knyphausen and his Hessians, in two columns.

The second was to be made by two battalions of light infantry and two battalions of guards under Mathew, who was to cross Harlem river in flat boats under cover of the redoubts.

This attack was to be supported by a force under command of Lord Cornwallis.

The third attack was to be made by Colonel Sterling, who was to drop down the Harlem river in boats to the left of the American lines facing New York.

The fourth attack was to be on the south by Lord Percy, with a combined force of English and Hessian troops.

Dick, on his last visit to the city, had fortunately gotten hold of these plans, and had communicated them to the general-in-chief.

Magaw's preparations had been made accordingly, and he was ready to meet the enemy upon all sides.

At about noon the sound of heavy cannonading, echoing among the hills, together with the sharp rattle of musketry, announced that the battle had begun.

Dick Slater, with his Liberty Boys on Cock Hill, was one of the first to be attacked.

Colonel Rahl, leading one of Knyphausen's columns, attempted to assail the hill.

Dick set his battery to work, and the Hessians were obliged to retreat.

Rahl very quickly found himself entangled in a woody defile which was not only difficult to penetrate, but where he was exposed to the fire of both the Liberty Boys and Rawling's riflemen.

Meanwhile the fight was going on at all points, and was sharply contested by every division of the Continentals.

Mathew had made good his landing, but was severely handled by Baxter, who was killed in the very act of encouraging his men.

The troops retreated while Mathew pushed on to cut off Cadwalader, who had given battle to Lord Percy until informed of Sterling's approach.

Sterling made a landing, and Cadwalader, beset on two sides, was obliged to retreat to the fort, which he did, marking his track by numbers of slain Hessians.

Dick and the Liberty Boys continued to hold Knyphausen at bay, pouring in volleys from muskets and pistols, and discharging the guns as rapidly as they could be loaded and fired.

At last their ammunition was exhausted, and the battery was useless.

The guns of the Liberty Boys, from being discharged so often, became fouled and were of no use.

Then Colonel Rahl, with the right division of the Hessians, forced his way directly up the north side of the hill.

Dick ordered the guns spiked, and retreated.

Down the hill they went in good order, firing a volley with their pistols as they descended.

They made good their escape, although the Hessians pursued them for some distance.

Fort Washington had fallen, and the Americans were at last driven from the island.

Washington, at Fort Lee, had witnessed the battle, and was greatly affected.

It seemed to mean the loss of Fort Lee next, and the occupation of the Jerseys by the victorious British.

Dick Slater did not lose heart, but said to Bob, as they rode away:

"It was a bad defeat, Bob, but the war is not over yet, by any means."

"Yes, they say that it's the darkest hour before the dawn, Dick."

"Very true, and there are brighter times coming."

Dick's hopeful spirit had a good influence on the rest, and gave them great encouragement.

Beaten, but not discouraged, the Liberty Boys made their way back to camp to await orders.

CHAPTER XV.

MORE TROUBLE FROM THE TORIES.

When the news of the fall of Fort Washington reached Westchester, Thompson Mills and the other Tories were very jubilant.

Dick met the old Tory on the street, and he said with a snarl:

"Ha, so you got licked, did you? Served you right. You'll get licked again and again till you won't have a leg to stand on."

"Being defeated in one fight does not mean being extinguished," was Dick's reply.

"We'll keep on lickin' you then till you are," snapped the Tory.

"Oh, 'we' will do it, eh? I don't think you had anything to do with it. I didn't hear of you or any of your gang being in the fight."

The old man snarled at this retort.

"You Tories don't fight; you burn barns and steal and beat boys. Pretty sort of fighting that, isn't it?"

"Don't you talk to me like that," snapped old Mills, turning livid.

"Oh, you don't like it? That shows that you are ashamed of yourself. There's some hope, then."

"I can't fight. I'm an old man," said Mills.

"You're not too old to do any mean act that you think of. You're not too old to use a club on a boy and burn barns."

"You never caught me burnin' a barn yet."

"No, but when I do you will catch it. You are none too good to do it, let me tell you that."

"Hain't you got no respect for an old man?" whined the Tory, taking a different tone.

"No, not when you do not deserve it. You are not an old man. You are simply whining. I have heard your talk before, and you will have to stop it or go out of the neighborhood."

Dick would not have spoken thus severely if he had not known that Thompson Mills was a scoundrel and capable of any evil deed.

He had some respect for the enemy who went into battle, taking his life in his hands for the sake of his convictions, but none for a hypocrite like the Tory.

"As long as you remain here," he concluded, "you will have to behave yourself. The instant that you cease to do so, out you go."

"You can't drive me out!" sneered Mills.

"We will see!" firmly. "I will not waste words with you, Mills. You have had your warning. See that you listen to it."

When Dick reached the camp Bob Estabrook said to him:

"These Tories are beginning to show their despicable spirit again. They need another lesson."

"They will get it if they return to their former practices," was Dick's reply.

"Av yez will only say dhe word, Dick," said Patsy. "Oi'll go an' wallop ivery lasht wan Oi see, just to tache dhim to be dacint."

"Wait a while, Patsy," said Dick. "We must not act rashly. Talk is cheap, and hurts no one, but as soon as these Tories show their hands again at any of their old tricks, we'll take a revenge that they will remember as long as they live."

"Yis, an' Oi'll be glad to be wan to give it to dhim, too."

The next day, as Dick, Bob, and one or two more of the youths were riding along the country road, they came upon a boy of twelve tied to a tree crying bitterly.

"What is the matter, my boy?" asked Dick.

"Take me down, sir; I can't stand it any longer."

The boy was tied so that his toes scarcely reached the ground, his arms being stretched to their utmost.

Dick quickly cut the boy's bonds, and Will Freeman supported him.

"Who did this?" asked Dick.

"Some men. They all had on masks, but they said I was a young rebel, and they would kill me if I didn't say 'God save the king' for them."

"And you did not?"

"No, and I would not."

"How long ago was this?"

"Just now. I guess they must have heard you coming, for they ran away all of a sudden."

"So, so, they are at their old tricks, are they?" said Bob, furiously.

"Hanging a few of the rascals would be a lesson to the rest," said Mark.

Dick said nothing.

He was thinking how to prevent a repetition of such acts as this.

It was of no use guessing at the perpetrators.

They must be caught in the act and punished to the fullest extent.

Suddenly he saw something on the ground not far distant.

It was a round felt hat, such as were worn by the farmers of the neighborhood.

As he stooped to pick up the hat he saw something else.

There were several footprints in the soft earth around the tree.

Many of them were confused, of course.

Among them, however, was one which could only have been made by a man with a club-foot.

There was only one such person in the whole neighborhood.

"Joe Mills is around again, and up to his old tricks," thought Dick.

Then he examined the hat carefully, inside and out.

There was a dark stain on the front of the brim.

Looking at it carefully, Dick saw that it was a thumb print.

The dark stain had been caused by blood which had dried.

The owner of the hat had had blood on his fingers when he had taken it off.

He may have cut his thumb or he may have been dressing a wound, and got blood on his hand.

There were no other marks by which the owner might possibly be traced.

"I will keep this," Dick thought. "Many a smaller clue than this has led to the detection of criminals."

He rolled the hat up and stuck it inside his coat.

"What have you got there, Dick?" asked Bob.

"Somebody's hat. I want to find the owner. He had a hand in this affair."

The boy was sent home, and then Dick and the rest rode on.

Pretty soon they met old Burgess, the Tory, and his son Bill, the latter a clumsy, half-grown lout, who was the ringleader of a lot of boys of his own class.

Burgess glared and looked black at Dick, but went on without a word.

Bill made some slighting remark as he passed, when Mark reached out with his hand, gave the fellow a thump, and rolled him over in the dirt.

Bill got up and began to howl, but Burgess went on, and after awhile, seeing that no one gave him any sympathy, Bill went on also.

Later the youths came to a ramshackle house by the side of the road, where an ill-favored young man sat on a bench whittling a stick.

He had one of his thumbs tied up with a big of rag, and at once Dick came to a conclusion.

The young man was known to be a Tory of the rankest and most outspoken class.

Dick rode up to him, dismounted, took the hat from his coat, and put it on the fellow's head.

It fitted perfectly.

"That is your hat," said Dick.

"Yuss, I lost it this mornin; the wind blowed it off when I was a-drivin' the cows ter paster. Where'd you find it?"

"I found it under a tree where you and some other

bullies had been tormenting a poor child. Now we are going to give you a taste of the same sort of medicine."

CHAPTER XVI.

GIVING LIKE FOR LIKE.

The young fellow turned pale, sprang to his feet, and tried to run into the house.

Dick tripped him up, and the rag flew off of his injured thumb.

It was covered with fresh blood.

"Take care of this lout," said Dick.

Mark and another youth quickly seized him.

Then Dick picked up his hat.

"Do you see this mark?" he asked. "Put his thumb on the brim, Will."

Will took the fellow's hand, and made a thumb print on the hat with it.

The two marks were identical.

"This hat is yours," said Dick. "You cut your thumb. Then you forgot the blood on it, and took off your hat. You left it on the ground where you and the other bullies suddenly ran away."

"I didn't have nothin' to do with it; I was on'y there," said the fellow.

He saw that the evidence was all against him, and was trying to crawl out of it.

"You are just as bad as the rest then, for you should have stopped it. Did you save that rope, Bob?"

"Yes."

"Bring it here."

"Don't hang me; I'll tell yer all about it!" whined the convicted bully.

"Tie him up against the house just as he helped to tie that poor boy," said Dick.

There was a projecting beam about eight feet from the ground.

The rope was thrown over this, and then the bully was tied up by his arms, with his toes just touching the ground.

Fellows like you have to be treated like this to make you understand," said Dick.

The fellow howled and begged to be let down.

"I don't believe in torture," said Dick, "but a dose of the same medicine you give others will cure you."

"Kindness or a moral lecture would be wasted on such fellows," said Will.

"What they want is a good whipping," said Mark Morrison.

"Now," said Dick, "you can hang there till you know how it feels, and I don't think you will want to try it on anyone else."

"It won't kill him," said Bob, "but it will teach him a

lesson. You can't reach bullies like that except through their physical senses."

At this moment two or three men came running up, attracted by the fellow's howls.

They were all Tories, and of the same stamp as the bully himself.

One of them was his father, in fact.

"Did you do this?" the man demanded of Dick.

"Yes, I gave him what he gave a boy of twelve just now. Ask him how he likes it."

"What business have you got to take the law into your hands?" growled the man.

"The right that every honest man has to punish a bully. If I see you beating your wife I will beat you. If you are caught tormenting a child, I will punish you, and so would any right-feeling man. It is not only his right to do so, but it is his duty."

"You rebels have got altogether too much ter say erbout what's right an'—"

"Shet up, dad, and cut me down!" howled the bully.

The Tories went to his assistance, and took him down.

He had not suffered one-tenth as much as the boy had, but it had been a wholesome lesson to him.

"Now, see here," said Dick. "You men don't fight, but you destroy property, steal, and persecute the weak. After this, whenever one of you is caught doing an evil deed he will be punished in the same way that your son was."

The Tory glared, but said nothing.

"We know a good many of you," continued Dick. "Are not you the man I shot in the shoulder the other day at —"

"I hain't got no time to talk to no rebels," snarled the man, as he went into the house.

"And you were at Thatcher's the other night," said Will to another. "That's where you got that bullet in the leg. Makes you limp, don't it?"

"Dunno what yer er-torkin' erbout," growled the man, hurrying away.

Then Dick and his little party rode off.

"That's the way to fix 'em," said Bob. "Serve 'em just the same as they serve others, and they'll very quickly stop it."

"That is what I intend to do, Rob," was Dick's reply, "and I want that you all shall do the same."

"These stay-at-home, stab-in-the-dark fighters have got to be taught a severe lesson," said Bob, "and I will do it every time I catch them at these tricks."

As they rode on the youths pretty soon heard the sound of loud laughter somewhere ahead of them.

They rode quickly forward, and as they rounded a bend in the road saw a number of men surrounding a mere youth, whom they were tormenting in some manner or another.

As they came up they saw that the men were sousing

their victim in a horse-trough, and every time he came up, sputtering and gasping, they would laugh boisterously.

So intent were they upon their cruel sport that they did not observe the patriot youths until they were upon them.

Dick sprang from his horse, quickly followed by the rest.

Then the men were seized.

"I know you fellows," said Dick. "You are Tories, every one of you."

The men tried to escape, but Dick gave a shrill whistle.

In a few moments Ben, Sam, Arthur, and two others came dashing up.

"What is it, Dick?" asked Ben.

"Do you know this boy?"

"Yes, he is Dan Walling. His father is in the patriot army."

"These bullies were abusing him. We are giving the Tories like for like these days."

"What were they doing?"

"The horse-trough is not big enough for all of them. Take them to the river."

There was a small stream not far distant, as Dick knew.

Thither the Tories were taken, despite their cries and struggles.

"Throw them in, clothes and all!" cried Dick.

The order was quickly obeyed.

Into the cold stream went the Tories, without further parley.

There was no ceremony used, either, the men being simply thrown in.

"I can't swim!" yelled one as he came up.

"Then walk," laughed Ben Spurlock, who was a jolly fellow. "It is not deep."

The Tories had no desire to swim in cold water with their clothes on.

They quickly made their way to shore, therefore.

As fast as one came out he was seized and thrown in again.

"What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander," laughed Ben.

The men now tried to evade the Liberty Boys.

Then Dick threatened to shoot if they did not come out at a certain point.

After that they obeyed, and were thrown in half a dozen times apiece.

Then, chilled to the bone, blue with the cold, and shivering in their soggy garments, Dick allowed them to come out.

"There!" he said. "It was not so funny, after all, was it? Now go home and behave yourselves. They say like cures like, so you ought to be well cured."

Then he left the shivering Tories to get home the best way they could, and rode off with his party.

CHAPTER XVII.

PUNISHING THE TORIES.

The practice of giving like for like to the Tories was not one that they at all relished.

They saw that the Liberty Boys were determined, and they took the lesson to heart.

Warnings would have no effect unless followed up, and Dick's warnings had been followed up.

A bully does not like to be bullied, and when these fellows received the same treatment that they gave to others, it had a most salutary effect.

They realized that they would be served just as they served others, and if it did not stop them it at least made them cautious.

"That's the kind of revenge to take upon them," said Bob. "Give them just what they give others, and they will understand that we are in earnest."

"I think that the most of them do understand it," replied Dick, dryly.

"Then if you catch one of the Tories burning another man's barn——"

"I will burn his," in a tone that left no room for doubt.

"Well, it's drastic treatment, but I'll stand by you in it, and so will every one of the Liberty Boys."

"It is the only treatment that will bring these sneaks and cowards to their senses," firmly.

"I believe you."

"They sneer and they jibe, but they won't fight. They go ten to one, and abuse weak, defenceless people; they steal and they burn barns under cover of the night; they go masked, and they run when they are caught. You've got to use extreme measures with them."

"I never said I would not," laughed Bob. "I always go in for extremes, while you generally have to hold me back."

Dick was obliged to smile, for he well knew Bob's fiery, impetuous nature.

"I won't hold you back now, Bob," he said. "We have started in punishing the Tories, and we must keep it up till they have their lesson thoroughly well learned."

There was not one of the youths who did not agree with him.

That night the neighborhood was patrolled as before by the Liberty Boys.

There might be some who had not yet learned the lesson, and Dick was determined that they all should do so.

Taking Bob, Mark, Will, Ben, Harry, Phil, and half a dozen more of the youths, Dick set out after dark to scour the neighborhood.

Another party of twenty, with strict orders to visit reprisals upon all, caught in the act of persecuting their

patriot neighbors, set out in an entirely opposite direction.

Dick proceeded quietly, and on foot, every one of his party being thoroughly armed and on the alert for the Tories.

They did not go in a body, but went in twos and threes, and far enough apart so that the word could be quickly passed along the line.

They kept in the shadows, and made as little noise as possible, not even indulging in conversation.

They had been out for some time when Dick, who was in the lead with Will, suddenly stopped.

Then he imitated the sound of a cricket.

It was taken up by Bob, and then by Mark and Ben in turn.

Dick touched Will on the arm, and then dropped to the ground.

Will obeyed in an instant, and crept along the fence after Dick.

There were men approaching, talking in very low tones.

Dick had heard them, and suspected them of having evil intentions.

There was a lane not far from where Dick had stopped.

The house it belonged to was on a crossroad, the barn being back of it.

"There's no one up," said one of the men.

"No, they ain't keeping as good a watch as they thought they was going to."

"That's where Murray lives, ain't it?"

"Yes, and he's a rank rebel."

"Well, we'll burn him out and get even on the Liberty Boys. They ain't quite as smart as they think they are."

"You've got everything handy, Benson?"

"Sh! I thought I heard something."

"No, Benson, it's only a cricket."

"Shut up calling my name, Jim Woolston."

"You shut up calling mine."

Dick knew both these men.

They were well-to-do Tories, and belonged to the same class as Thompson Mills.

There was another man in the party, but he had not said very much.

The men turned into the lane, and went on rapidly.

When they reached the rear of the barn they ripped off three or four boards, and produced matches and a lot of inflammable stuff.

This they lighted, and Dick and Will, not ten feet away, saw their faces most distinctly.

Dick suddenly whistled and sprang up.

In an instant several dark forms sprang up and forward.

The Tories were seized before they were aware that anyone was about.

The burning stuff was thrown on the ground, but it blazed furiously, and lighted up the group of Liberty Boys.

"You know me, Buck Benson," said Dick, "and you know that I always keep my word."

The man said nothing.

"You know that I have said that we will treat you fellows the same as we caught you treating others, don't you?"

"What are you going to do?" asked the man, in sudden alarm.

"You will see. You are the ringleader in this affair, and we will deal with you first. Fetch them along, boys."

The whole party was present, and they quickly hurried the three men down the lane.

Dick knew where Benson lived, and he led the way there at a rapid pace.

Reaching the place, he led the way to the barn.

"Now, then, you were going to burn Mr. Murray's barn. He is a staunch patriot, and a good man, while you are a sneak and a coward, and you also bear a bad reputation."

"You rebels will catch it for this," growled Tory Benson.

"Never mind that. Here we are. Now set fire to your own barn."

"I won't!" savagely.

"Then we will do it for you. Get your matches ready, boys."

"You will ruin me!" the Tory whined. "All my fine horses are in there. I wouldn't take twenty pounds apiece for my cows, and they are there, too. I shall be ruined."

"Did you think about Murray? He has no valuable cows and horses, but he would feel the loss much more than you would. Set it on fire, boys!"

The youths sprang to obey the order.

They took out the horses and cows, and got torches ready to apply them at the word.

Then Benson's wife, hearing the confusion, came out to see what it meant.

"What are you going to do?" she asked anxiously of Dick.

"Serve a sneak the way he would serve an honest man—burn his barn to the ground."

"Were you going to do that, Buckingham?" the woman asked.

"Murray is a rebel and ought to be burned out," replied Benson.

"And you are a coward. Captain Slater, you are right, but I beg that you will not carry out your threat. The barn and everything in it belong to me. My husband does not own a penny's worth in that, or the house, either."

"Stop, boys!" said Dick. "We will take this fellow to jail instead."

CHAPTER XVIII.

OLD MILLS GETS HIS DESERTS.

The Tory's wife spoke the truth, as she quickly proved by showing her deeds.

Dick would not take revenge upon her, and the torches were extinguished and the animals taken back into the barn.

The three men were taken away and lodged in jail on complaint of Dick, Bob, Will, and others, who had seen them about to fire the barn.

There were no more barn burnings after that as long as the Liberty Boys remained in the immediate neighborhood.

The Tories were thoroughly frightened now, and realized that they had gone as far as it was safe for them to go.

Benson and the others were sent to jail for two years for conspiring to burn Murray's barn.

Mrs. Benson thanked Dick and the Liberty Boys for their efforts in behalf of law and order, and concluded:

"I am a royalist, but I do not sanction any such acts as my husband and his cronies have been convicted of. War is one thing, and deliberate persecution is another."

Joe Mills disappeared and was not seen again in a long time, but his father was as rabid, if not more so, as ever.

He talked openly regarding what he would do to the rebels, and defied anyone to stop him.

As long as he simply talked Dick did not say anything.

When he got to doing things it would be time enough to act.

It was not long before he did.

He got hold of a boy of about Will Freeman's age who had insulted him, so he said.

The boy had simply fired up when Thompson Mills was abusing the patriots.

"You are a sneak and a coward, and afraid to fight," the boy said. "You are a traitor, too, for you make your living here, and then abuse the people."

"Don't you dare to talk to me like that," stormed the Tory.

"I will talk to you, and I'll tell you just what I think. You're a sneak and a coward and a bully. You've been stirring up men to do all sorts of wicked things, but you've taken pretty good care not to be caught doing them yourself."

"If you don't look out I'll——"

"You won't dare touch me," answered the boy. "You are afraid of the Liberty Boys."

The Tory went away growling, but that afternoon the boy was waylaid by four or five men in the Tory's employ.

It chanced that another boy saw them taking him away.

He hastened at once to the camp of the Liberty Boys and told Dick all about it.

Dick at once took a dozen of the Liberty Boys and rode to the Tory's place.

The gates were all locked and barred, and Dick was refused admission at the door.

"Come, boys," he said. "We are going to get in, anyhow."

Then they scaled the fence, getting up by each other's shoulders.

Then they opened the gate and let in the rest of the boys.

They had arrived none too soon, as they quickly learned.

They found the boy tied to the fence and Mills and others beating him with sticks.

They rushed forward in a body.

"Like for like, Mills!" they cried.

The Tory knew what they meant, and he tried to escape.

They quickly surrounded and disarmed him and the men.

They tied them up as the boy had been tied by the rascals.

Then they gave them a sound beating, the boy giving the first blow.

"Now it's your turn, Mills," said Dick to the vindictive Tory.

"I am an old man, and it will kill me," whined the villain.

"You are an old liar, and have a good constitution," said Bob.

"Tie him up," said Dick.

The Tory begged and whined, and then he threatened.

He was tied up to a post and stripped clear to the waist.

Then the men he had hired to waylay Will Freeman and the other youth were made to give him a sound beating.

"I would not touch you on any account," said Dick, "nor ask any decent boy to do so."

The men had no scruples of that sort.

They laid on the lashes with a will.

Mills howled and yelled and threatened, but all to no purpose.

The Liberty Boys kept them at the work till they were tired.

"That's enough," said Dick at length. "I think he knows how it feels."

Then Dick and the Liberty Boys rode away.

The men decamped in haste, not daring to remain with Thompson Mills after what had happened.

They left him tied up just as he was, and made all haste to leave the neighborhood.

His younger son found him some time after and released him.

He threatened to take vengeance in many ways upon the Liberty Boys, but did nothing.

The men who had toadied to him heard of the story of his punishment.

After that they had neither fear nor respect left for him.

They jeered at him, they laughed at him openly, and two or three went so far as to strike him in a public place.

He closed up his house, and went away, never returning to the neighborhood.

Later the place was sold and cut up into smaller lots.

The Tory did not realize much from the sale, however, as his agent swindled him and decamped with the money.

The revenge of the Liberty Boys had fallen upon him, and it was a warning to others.

With many in jail, others in hiding, and many still smarting under the just punishment they had received, the Tories gave the place no trouble after old Mills had gone.

"We have kept our word," said Dick, "and if any of these scoundrels doubts that we will continue to keep it, let him try it if he thinks best."

Dick had already given the general-in-chief the money found in the buried chest, and he now determined to go to New York, dispose of the lace, and learn what he could of the movements of the enemy.

He accordingly set out one morning early, reached the city without detection, and at once began to look for a dealer in laces and to pick up valuable information.

CHAPTER XIX.

LEAVING WESTCHESTER.

Dick was in the disguise of a respectable, middle-aged man of moderate means.

There was nothing very striking in his appearance, and as he walked along the street he attracted very little attention.

Entering a shop where they sold silks, laces, and such finery, he asked to see the proprietor.

A shrewd-looking foreigner came forward.

"Do you buy laces?" asked the pretended middle-aged person.

"Yesh, eef dey are goot. Ve don't seel any sheep laces."

"Would you buy some like this?" and Dick put a small piece of about a yard on the counter.

The man opened his eyes in amazement.

The lace was really very fine and old, and of the best texture.

Being buried so long had not seemed to injure the fabric.

"Where you get dis?" he asked.

"It has been in the family a great many years."

"Ha, I should shay so. Dot lace is a hundret year old."

"Yes, it must be."

"Ish dis all you got?"

"No, I have more. It is not all so fine as this."

Then Dick displayed more of the lace.

"Real Spanish?" asked the dealer. "Ve do not buy de sheep lace nor de imitations."

"Yes, it is real Spanish. It was in an old Dutch family for generations."

"How moche you want?"

"What will you give?"

"Ah, I dot sheel, I buysh. Vat you want?"

"A hundred pounds for the lot."

"Ah, you tink I am reesh mans? De lace is not worth so moche."

"There are yards of it. Some of it is not cut. The grand ladies will buy it."

"Vhy you shell?" asked the dealer, suspiciously.

"Ah, there is no one in the family to wear old laces, and the war makes us do many things."

"You want de monish?"

"Yes, but I want a fair amount for the goods."

"I gifes you twenty poundsh."

Dick began to roll up the lace.

"Vell, I gifes you ten poundsh for dis piece. I not wants de oders. I could not shell it."

"No, I want to sell it all."

"I gifes you forty, but I robsh myself."

Dick knew that the price he had named was much under the actual value of the lace, but he was satisfied to take it.

"No, I cannot sell it for that. You can realize much more than that, I know."

"It ish very hold."

"So much the better."

"And it ees dirty."

"Only discolored."

"And it ees torn."

"No, it is in fine condition, but if you do not want it —"

"I gifes you fifty."

"No, not a penny less than a hundred. It is worth five. Think of the grand ladies, the countesses, and duchesses who would give you your own price."

"Ah, you shall shell to dem yourshelf eef you are so shertain of eet."

"No, I do not meet them, but you are in the business."

"Ah, but de war makesh de peoplesh poor; dey not want laces. I gifes you eighty poundsh, and dat ees my lasht figure."

"No, I want a hundred."

"Shplit de deef'rensh and shay ninety. As I am an honest man I makesh myself poor to gife you dat," bargained the fellow.

"No; I said a hundred pounds, and I won't take less. I know the value of these things. I would not sell at all, only there is no one to wear the lace, and I had rather dispose of it."

"I gifes you ninety now and de resht to-morrow. I hafe not so moche monish as a hundert poundsh in mine shop now."

"Well, I'll come to-morrow if I do not find a dealer who will give me the price."

The dealer knew that he was paying less than a quarter of what he could sell the lace for, even at a very low price.

"You take ninety-five?"

"No, a hundred," and Dick began to pack the lace up again.

"Ah, it ish robbery, but I hatesh to shee dot lace go to a mansh vat don't appreciate it, and I hafe some pitities. Let me gife you a case of wine to make de deef'rensh."

"No; I want the money."

At last the man counted out the price in gold, silver, and copper, managing to give a florin or so less than the full amount.

Dick said nothing, however, but put the coin in a stout leather wallet and left the shop.

He took care to see that he was not followed, and went to a tavern whose respectability was unquestioned, and hired a room for the night.

In the neighborhood of the British headquarters he saw that there was a great deal of bustle, and suspected that important matters were being discussed.

At Fraunce's Tavern he encountered a great many British officers, and heard one, pretty well in his cups, say to another:

"Well, me boy, the next move that Sir William makes will be against Fort Lee, and then our Mr. Washington will be ousted, and I know it's going to happen pretty soon."

"You seem to be in Sir William's confidence, Sir Rod-erick."

"I am, me boy, and what I tell you——"

His companions quickly hushed off the garrulous knight, and Dick shortly left the tavern.

He left the city the next morning, passed the lines with some difficulty, having to bribe two or three sentries, and then he made his way with all haste back to the camp.

He gave the money he had obtained for the laces to Lucy, who wished to give it to the general, but he prevailed upon her to keep it for her own use.

Washington was speedily informed of what he had learned, and it was not long afterward that it proved to be correct.

Fort Lee was abandoned, and the army went into the Jerseys, where Dick and the Liberty Boys joined the general-in-chief toward the end of the month.

Stirring times were coming for the Liberty Boys, but they were eager for them, and anxious to do more service for their country.

Neither Dick nor Bob nor any of them regarded the war as over yet, notwithstanding their reverses. All were anxious to be doing something, and had the brightest hopes for the future.

THE END.

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